

Moran on Imagination and Fictional Emotions

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One of the central concerns of Moran's essay *The Expression of Feeling in Imagination*¹ is to address the problem of fictional emotions - that is, of our emotional responses towards fictional characters, situations or events – and to clarify whether it is essentially related to some form of imagining or another.² Moran's specific aim is thereby to criticise Walton's solution to the problem in terms of (as it seems) propositional imagining, and to present his own alternative account in terms of emotional imagining. In this paper, I will primarily be concerned with the question of whether he has succeeded in this aim. But I intend also to briefly introduce and discuss towards the end a third approach to the problem and, especially, to the issue of whether imagining plays a central role in the occurrence of fictional emotions.

The paper is divided into seven sections. In the first, I will outline the puzzle of fictional emotions, as it is commonly conceived of. The second section is then devoted to Moran's distinction between propositional and emotional imagining. In the third and fourth parts, I will present and comment on Moran's views about the nature and the problem of fictional emotions. The fifth section will deal with Walton's solution to the problem and with Moran's particular (mis-)understandings of aspects of this solution. In the sixth part of the paper, I will take a look at the relationship between Moran's and Walton's accounts and ask specifically whether they should be seen as rival theories. And the final section addresses the possibility of accounting for fictional emotions in terms of a third kind of imagining, namely the non-propositional imagining of emotional episodes.

I. The puzzle of fictional emotions

There has been a long tradition of taking our emotional reactions to fictional entities to be puzzling. At the heart of the respective discussions has been the following so-called paradox of fictional emotions:³

1 Cf. Moran (1994). If not stated otherwise, all page references are to this article.

2 To call them 'fictional emotions' is perhaps misleading, since it is not intended to imply that they are of the same ontological status as fictional characters or events in a story. In fact, they are real mental phenomena. But I will nevertheless call them 'fictional' because of the fictionality of their targets (and because always calling them 'emotions directed at fictional entities' would be rather awkward). The same considerations apply to my talk of 'real emotions' and 'non-actual emotions' (i.e., emotions directed at real or non-actual entities).

Moran's other central concern in his paper is to investigate the phenomenon of imaginative resistance and, ultimately, to explain it in terms of an inability to engage in dramatic imagining (cf. section 4 in Moran's paper). But apart from a suggested link between this form of imagining and the type of imagining, which Moran takes to be involved in fictional emotions (i.e., emotional imagining), the issue of imaginative resistance can and will be ignored here (cf. note 5 below for an elucidation of the two kinds of imagining and their relationship).

3 Cf. the essays in Hjort & Laver (1997), and especially the introduction by Levinson (1997), the reliance on which in the following discussion should be obvious.

- (a) We have emotions concerning fictional characters or situations.
- (b) Emotions (often) presuppose belief in the existence (and other features) of the objects concerned.
- (c) We do not believe in the existence (or other features) of fictional entities.

This puzzle possesses considerable initial force. For example, it seems plausible to say that we are often afraid of the monsters when watching a horror movie and equally often feel sympathy towards the hero or heroine when reading a tragedy. But it appears likewise plausible to say that genuine fear or sympathy require us to believe that the respective objects exist as part of reality. When we think that there is really no lion in the room, it seems impossible for us to fear it. However, when we watch movies or read tragedies, we usually do not take their characters and events to be real. Hence, we typically lack the belief that they exist as part of reality. And it thus becomes puzzling why we nevertheless seem to react with something like an emotion of fear or sympathy to these fictional entities.

The described problem of fictional emotions has been widely debated, and many different solutions to it have been proposed. Given that both the tension between (a), (b) and (c) and the claim (c) itself seem undeniable, there are mainly two broad strategies of how to deal with the puzzle.⁴ On the one hand, it is possible to deny (a), for instance by claiming that our responses to fictional entities do not constitute genuine emotions, even though they may resemble emotions in certain important aspects (e.g., in involving affective aspects and bodily changes).⁵ Perhaps proponents of this answer are also forced or willing to accept furthermore that we are in some sense wrong or irrational to treat our emotion-like responses to fictional entities as if they were genuine emotions. On the other hand, it is possible to deny (b), presumably by claiming that imagining the existence of objects may already suffice for having emotions towards them. Again, this may lead to an additional postulation of an irrationality inherent to fictional emotions, in this case concerning the fact that it appears somehow inappropriate (at least in most cases) to feel emotions towards imagined entities. At least, to respond with fear seems to be *more* suitable when one perceives or believes a lion to be in the room than when one merely visualizes or imagines it to be there.

II. Moran's two kinds of imagining

In order to get clearer about the nature of the puzzle of fictional emotions, Moran distinguishes in the course of his paper between two kinds of imaginative mental episodes or activities: (i) 'propositional' or

4 A third, but generally far less attractive strategy would be to accept (a), (b) and (c) and postulate a systematic form of irrationality as an essential ingredient of our emotional responses to fictions (cf. Radford (1975)).

5 Another possible denial of (a) would claim that, although fictional emotions are as genuine as real emotions, the two are not of the same kind: that is, we never feel fear or sympathy towards fictional entities, but some other genuine emotions, which resemble fear and sympathy, and which we can, again, not feel towards real entities. But it would seem odd to maintain that there genuine emotions which are limited to fictions. For which evolutionary reason, for instance, would we have them acquired, and would they possess this restriction?

'hypothetical imagining' (104) and 'emotional imagining' (90).⁶

Propositional or hypothetical imagining amounts to the simple imaginative entertaining of a proposition - for instance, when we imagine or suppose that it rains (perhaps as part of some hypothetical reasoning). Propositional imaginings are thus instances of conceptual or intellectual thought and as such differ from sensory forms of representation, such as visual perceptions or memories, or bodily sensations. Moran leaves it open whether all non-endorsing or non-judgemental entertainings of a proposition are imaginative, or whether instead there is a difference, say, between merely having the thought that it rains and imagining or supposing the same proposition. But he is clear about the fact that mere propositional imagining is dispassionate, that is, does not involve any real emotional feelings or affective elements - though of course it is possible to propositionally and dispassionately to imagine that one has certain emotional feelings (89f.).

Emotional imagining - or imagining 'with respect to emotional attitudes' (105) - consists in imagining something (typically a proposition) with feeling or emotion, in contrast to imagining it dispassionately (90). Moran's examples are imagining something with loathing (86), anticipation (90), apprehension or regret (93). The affective aspect of the imaginative episode consists thereby in a real, and not merely in an imagined, feeling. Accordingly, imagining something with regret involves really feeling regret. And emotional imagining is not, or not merely, a matter of propositional imagining. In particular, imagining something with, say, sadness cannot be reduced to imagining that one feels sad: while the former involves a real feeling of sadness, the latter does not. Now, given that the affective aspect of emotional imagining is real, and not merely imagined, it should - as Moran maintains - be located in the manner (or mode), and not in the

⁶ Moran discusses also a third and more complex kind of imagining, namely 'dramatic' or 'empathetic imagining' (104). It consists in the imaginative adoption of and identification with a certain point of view different from one's own. The adopted perspectives in question are typically characterized partly by a set of evaluative attitudes and the related emotional or conative dispositions. Thus, imaginatively adopting such a point of view usually involves imagining the respective evaluative and affective responses to given situations. As Moran describes it, the phenomenon of dramatic imagination seems to be very similar to - if not identical with - the phenomenon of empathy (or the closely related phenomenon of imagining being in the place or shoes of someone else; cf. Goldie (2000) for an extensive discussion of imaginative projects of this kind).

Moran does not always clearly distinguish between emotional imagining and dramatic imagining. In fact, he notes certain close links between the two. Empathetic identification with a certain point of view different from one's own often involves the 'dramatic rehearsal of emotions'; while emotional imagining 'may require such things as dramatic rehearsal', it 'involves something ... like a point of view, a total perspective on the situation' (105). However, it seems that the two are nevertheless quite different phenomena. Not only seems dramatic imagining typically much more complex than emotional imagining (e.g., it normally results in temporally extended mental projects rather than in short-term mental episodes), but there appears to be, at least to some extent, a certain independence between the two phenomena. For it seems that we can empathize with or enter the mind of another person without actually having any real feelings, but instead only imagining them (cf. the proposal put forward in the seventh section). And, on the other hand, it appears that we can respond with fear to imagining the scenario of being pursued by a lion without thereby imaginatively adopting a particular point of view different from one's own (but cf. the discussion between, for instance, Peacocke (1985) and Martin (2002) questioning this possibility and Williams (1966) and Hopkins (1998) affirming it).

Besides, Moran introduces the notion of imaginativeness (86) which denotes for him a complex ability covering, in particular: the ability to recognize and link the features of artworks which are responsible for their emotional tone (i.e., their 'expressive features' (86f.)); the ability to emotionally and otherwise respond to these features and their links (86); and the ability to empathize with or put oneself in the place of someone else (87). It thus includes or combines both the capacity to imagine emotionally and the capacity to imagine dramatically.

(propositional) content, of the imagining (90; 93). The statement that something is imagined with feeling or emotion thus qualifies how it is imagined, and not what is imagined, and is therefore likened by Moran to the statement, say, that something is imagined visually (93).

With this distinction in the background, Moran is now equipped to address the two issues of the nature and of the puzzle of fictional emotions.

III. Moran on the nature of fictional emotions

Moran's view

Point 1. With respect to the nature of fictional emotions, he first of all rejects the account of fictional emotions in terms of the propositional imagining of certain fictional truths. This account is characterized by the fact that it reduces emotional responses towards fictional entities to certain kinds of propositional imaginings - namely those concerned with imagining emotional responses towards the entities in question. Responding with fear to a monster in a horror movie is thus said to amount to imagining that one feels fear towards the monster. And the emotional responses are taken to be part of what is imagined, of the entertained proposition or content. However, as Moran observes, fictional emotions involve real, and not merely imagined, feelings; while propositional imagining on its own remains dispassionate. That the feelings involved in the fictional emotions are real becomes particularly apparent in the fact that we are often held responsible for having, or failing to have, them. As Moran notes, we may be praised or blamed (morally or otherwise) in relation to whether we react to fictional works, say, with laughter or lust (93f.); and how we react often reveals something important about our personality (105). One of Moran's examples is someone who laughs at a racist joke and whom we take to thereby show his condemnable racist attitudes. But now, the fact that fictional emotions involve real, affective elements has the result that no mere imagining of propositions (whether they concern emotional responses or not) suffices to generate the typical emotional responses which we have towards fictional entities. For the dispassionate imagining of propositions cannot alone give rise to imagining with real emotional involvement.

Point 2. The alternative proposal put forward by Moran maintains that the fictional emotions are instances of emotional imagining. As already noted, the fictional emotions involve both the imagining of certain aspects of the fictional world in question (e.g., that a character suffers unjust treatment) and really felt responses towards these or related aspects (e.g., real feelings of sympathy towards the character and of anger towards the unjust perpetrators). And because of this, they seem to fit the characterisation of emotional imagining, that is, of imagining with feeling or emotion. But if fictional emotions are instances of emotional imagining, then what is important about them and what is responsible for their affective character is not the imagined content, but instead the manner of imagining - namely that whatever is imagined is imagined with real

feeling. For emotional imagining is a matter of how, and not of what, one imagines.

Some comments

I agree with Moran's rejection of the reduction of fictional emotions to propositional imaginings (cf. point 1). But his proposal to treat fictional emotions as instances of emotional imagining (cf. point 2) faces the serious objection that it is doubtful that there is anything like emotional imagining. Of course, there are cases which involve both (propositionally) imagining something and emotionally responding towards the imagined with real feeling. And fictional emotions seem indeed to belong to these cases. But as Moran understands it, emotional imagining is more than the mere conjunction of some imagining and some subsequent emotional response. For the two elements are also unified in a single (though presumably complex) episode of imagining - namely one that possesses a certain content and is furthermore characterized by an emotional manner of imagining. At least, this interpretation is strongly suggested by the analogy with visualizing which Moran draws. In visualizing, the content and the manner of imagining are also aspects of a single imaginative episode. However, the postulation of an imaginative episode with an emotional manner seems to be highly implausible.

One important reason for this is that there does not seem to be any reason to treat the mental whole made up by the dispassionate imagining and the accompanying emotional reaction as an instance of *imagining*. In particular, if it is assumed that what is distinctive of imaginings is that they are - at least in principle and to a certain extent - directly subject to the will, the episode as a whole will not qualify as an imagining, given that the occurrence of its emotional part is solely the matter of the manifestation of the respective causal disposition and hence purely passive. Of course, the exceptionlessness of this claim can be plausibly denied, for instance by pointing to spontaneously arising images and thoughts, aimlessly wandering daydreams, and similar phenomena.⁷ But even in this case, it seems undeniable that there is not a single form of imagining which remains - say, due to our psychological nature - passive in *all* its instances and never occurs as the direct result of some respective desire or intention.⁸ And, moreover, we appear to be principally able to exert voluntary control over how we imagine something - at least with respect to all traditionally assumed manners of imagining, such as imagining in a visual, auditory or propositional way. In contrast, emotional imagining and, in particular, the choice of an emotional manner of imagining is never up to us because of the causal nature of emotional dispositions.

7 Cf., for instance, O'Shaughnessy's discussion of imaginings in his (2000). For the opposing view that all imagining is voluntary, cf., for example, Scruton (1974) and McGinn (2004). I discuss the different positions and considerations and side with the latter in my (2005a).

8 The only exception sometimes put forward is the specific awareness of what is depicted involved in our experience of pictures. Apart from ambiguous pictures, it is clearly not up to us whether we see a horse or a house in a painting. But it has nevertheless been argued that the awareness of the depicted is imaginative (cf. Scruton (1974), Walton (1990) and O'Shaughnessy (2000)). I discuss and reject this view in my (2005b).

Besides, the complex episode consisting in the initial imagining and the added emotional response does not seem to possess another feature which suffices to mark it as imaginative. Rather, only the underlying imagining should be treated as imaginative, while the emotional response seems to be as unrelated to imaginative activity as any other manifestation of emotion. Just as our feelings of fear towards real entities do not count as instances of imagining, our feelings of fear towards fictional entities should not either. It seems to turn out that emotional 'imagining' is not a form of *imagining*, after all.

The other main reason for rejecting the application, if not the consistency, of the idea of emotional imagining is that it is difficult to make sense of an *emotional manner* of imagining. First of all, how something is imagined (or, more generally, represented) seems to put a restriction on what can be imagined (or represented). At least, this is the case with all the traditionally accepted forms of imagining. We can visualize only objects and features which are visible (and which have been seen by us before in some way or other); just as we can propositionally imagine or suppose only propositions, and only those which we can conceive of. In contrast, there does not seem to be any distinctive limitation to the things which we can imagine with feeling, or with certain feelings. Moreover, the traditionally assumed manners of imagining exclude each other. Thus, we cannot imagine something, in a single instance of imagining, both visually and auditorily, or both visually and propositionally. Of course, we can simultaneously be engaged in two distinct imaginings about the same thing, one visual and the other auditory or propositional. But each of the two imaginative representations still possesses only a single manner of imagining.⁹ In contrast, there does not seem to be any problem with visualizing something with feeling, or indeed with propositionally imagining it with feeling. As a result, saying that something is imagined *with emotion* does not seem to pick out a *manner* of imagining - at least not in the same sense as saying that something is imagined visually or propositionally does.

It therefore seems advisable to give up on the notion of emotional imagining and to try to elucidate the nature of fictional emotions in a different way. One option is to clearly separate the imagining (with its content and its manner) from the emotional response towards it and to treat the latter, not as a manner of the former, but as a non-imaginative affective episode in its own rights which accompanies the former. This seems to be Walton's choice, which will be discussed more in detail in the sixth section below, where it also will become clear why Moran might have overlooked or neglected this option.

The other alternative is based on the idea that the fictional emotions' possession of a real affective character may nevertheless be due to what is imagined, rather than to how something is imagined - namely if one focusses on the possibility of imagining experiences or feelings of emotion *non-propositionally* (i.e., in a non-conceptual or sensory manner). Accordingly, the emotional aspect of fictional emotions is still treated as

⁹ I assume here that there is a principle distinction between so-called 'propositional' and 'sensory' ways of representing things, as exemplified by, say, judgements or beliefs, on the one hand, and perceptions or sensations, on the other. Perhaps the difference at play here turns out to be different from that between mental states, which are related to propositions (or represent conceptually), and mental states, which are not. But even then, there will remain a qualitative difference between the two kinds of content - for instance, that only judging or believing something requires rational support, but not perceiving or sensing it. It is this basic distinction which I have in mind.

part of the imagining, and not as an additional non-imaginative mental episode; and, more specifically, it is still treated as part of the (non-propositional) content of the imagining. I will discuss the plausibility of this option in the last and seventh section of this paper.

IV. The puzzle of fictional emotions revisited

Moran's view

Moran's treatment of the seeming paradoxicalness of fictional emotions is fairly independent of his specific claim that fictional emotions are instances of emotional imagining. But their involvement of real feelings and their subsequent irreducibility to propositional imaginings are highly relevant.

Point 3. Central to his treatment is the observation that the fact, that fictional emotions involve real feelings, renders them very similar to many emotional responses towards entities which are real, but non-actual - say, because they belong to the remembered past or anticipated future, or to some possibilities considered to be fairly easily realized and fairly close to the actual course of events. His insight is that many of these latter cases - such as reexperiencing the fear felt when having been mugged, regretting or feeling relief about having started the clarifying conversation, looking forward with joy to the evening ahead, feeling comforted while and because of thinking about how things might have turned out worse, or 'wincing and jerking [one's] hand back when someone else nearby slices into his hand' (78) - resemble fictional emotions very closely in that they also involve real feelings, while nevertheless being directed at entities which are not of actual concern to us. In particular, this similarity holds independently of whether the lack of actual relevance for us of the objects in question is the result of their being fictional, of their dangers being already gone, of their joys being still not realized, and so on.

Point 4. From this similarity and from the fact that we do not seem to treat our real emotional responses to non-actual entities as very puzzling, Moran concludes that our feelings towards fictional entities are, too, not particularly problematic (77f.). As it appears, there is no real *puzzle* of fictional emotions.

Point 5. Besides, even if fictional emotions would turn out to be in some way paradoxical, or more generally in need of explanation, this would not be due - or at least not primarily - to the fictional character of their targets, given that they are not significantly different from emotions directed at non-fictional non-actual entities. Hence, the distinction between reality and fiction appears to be irrelevant for an explanation of the fictional emotions. And the talk of a specific puzzle of *fictional* emotions seems to be rather misleading. If there would be some paradoxicalness pertaining to emotions directed at fictional entities, it would pertain to emotions directed at non-actual emotions as well, and presumably in a similar way as that expressed by (a), (b) and (c). Furthermore, this conclusion appears to fit well with the earlier result that fictional emotions

cannot be accounted for in terms of propositional imagining alone. For Moran seems to think that (in Walton's theory) only propositional imagining - but not emotional imagining - is concerned with what is fictionally true in a given work (i.e., part of the represented fictional world). Hence, something else than fictional truth is involved in and important for fictional emotions.

Point 6. The noted similarity between emotional responses towards fictional entities and emotional responses towards real, but non-actual entities seems to motivate Moran also to endorse the view that the former are genuine instances of emotions, and not merely quasi-emotions which involve some affective elements or types of feelings, but do not amount to the real thing, that is, to proper emotions. Hence, fictional emotions are said to be genuine in two senses: they involve real feelings (and not merely imagined or fictional ones; cf. point 1 above); and these feelings are really instances of emotions (and not merely of emotion-like mental states). As a consequence, Moran seems to adopt the second strategy of dealing with problem of fictional emotions and to reject (b).

Some comments

Moran is right to stress the close similarity between many emotions felt towards fictional entities and many emotions felt towards real, but non-actual entities (cf. point 3). Although he is not absolutely explicit about this, this resemblance stems from the fact that both constitute responses to entities which are not of actual present relevance to us. And some of his subsequent conclusions - for instance, that the two types emotional reactions are equally problematic (cf. point 4), and that any potential paradoxicalness involved in them would not have too much to do with the fictionality of the involved targets (cf. point 5) - seem to be convincing as well.

However, it does not follow from these considerations that fictional emotions - or non-actual emotions in general - are not deeply puzzling. It is true that the original problem of fictional emotions cannot be upheld. But it may be substituted by a more general problem of non-actual emotions, the formulation of which seems to suggest that Moran has merely shifted the problem:

(a*) We have emotions concerning objects which are not of actual and present relevance to us (e.g., because they are fictional, past, future, possible, etc.).

(b*) Emotions (often) presuppose belief in the actual presence (and relevance) of the objects concerned.

(c*) We do not believe in the actual presence (or relevance) of non-actual objects.

Again, (c*) and the tension between the three claims seem to be undeniable, while (a*) and (b*) seem to show some initial plausibility. In particular, it seems, at least at face value, reasonable to argue that we cannot fear or sympathize with what we do not take to be actually present, or of actual concern to us. That is,

it is not obvious that our fear-like responses towards ghosts and spiders are really genuine (though perhaps systematically irrational) instances of fear, instead of being some affective reactions of a different type than emotions (cf. Walton's quasi-emotions in his (1990)). And anew, the two options are to reject (a*) or (b*), either alternative presumably linked to a different charge of widespread irrationality.

Now, in order to support his view that our emotional responses towards non-actual entities are nevertheless not puzzling, Moran appears to adopt, at least implicitly, two different lines of argumentation. First, he notes that we do not take many of our emotional reactions towards real, but non-actual entities to be problematic and suggests that this is good evidence for their not being problematic - a conclusion which should then be extended to fictional emotions as well (78ff.). Second, he insists that our emotional responses to non-actual entities constitute genuine instances of emotion (cf. point 6) - presumably because they involve real feelings, as well related bodily changes, certain action tendencies, and so on (78ff.). But if they are genuine (though perhaps systematically irrational) emotions, (b*) seems to be clearly false, and the paradoxicalness of non-actual emotions seems to disappear.

The problem with these two lines of reasoning is that Moran does not provide sufficient support for either. Our irrationality in these cases may show itself precisely in the fact that we *erroneously* do not take many of the non-actual emotions to be problematic. And it is far from clear that any mental episode, which involves some affective element and is accompanied by certain motivations and bodily events, should count as an emotion - and not, say, as an occurrent desire or sensation. After all, there is a crucial difference between involving a real feeling and being a real emotion (cf. point 6).¹⁰

Hence, it seems that Moran's main contribution to the debate about fictional emotions is to show that it is not the fictionality of their targets which renders them puzzling (cf. point 5) - or, in other words, that there is no specific problem of *fictional* emotions. But the intuitions and worries underlying the original postulation of some sort of paradoxicalness have not been undermined or explained (away) by him. It is still open whether fictional emotions - or non-actual emotions in general - should count as genuine instances of emotion; and hence how the tension between (a*), (b*) and (c*) should be resolved.

¹⁰ It is interesting to note here that Moran claims elsewhere that emotions constitute the paradigm examples of mental states which are partly constituted by how we interpret them by means of avowals, that is, the special first-personal and authoritative form of self-knowledge which we enjoy and which Moran takes to be essential to being a rational person (cf. Moran (2001)). Perhaps his account of this form of self-knowledge may provide him with further resources to argue that affective episodes accompanied by certain motivations and bodily events usually are emotions (of certain kinds) in case we take them to be so. One worry, however, is that Moran's account of self-knowledge seems to be more concerned with the idea that we can by means of avowals determine which *particular* emotions we feel (e.g., anger or rage), than with the idea that we can in this way determine that we are confronted with an *emotion* rather than a mental state of some other kind.

V. Walton's account of fictional emotions

Moran's view

Moran's main opponent in the essay is Walton. However, Moran's criticism misses its target, partly because of the objections to Moran's own account raised above, and partly due to certain misunderstandings by Moran of how Walton conceives of our engagement with fictional works (cf. also Walton's response in his (1997)). In particular, it seems that Walton's theory is compatible with Moran's own account and might actually endorse parts of it.

Moran attributes most of the views criticised by him - for instance, the claims that the fictional emotions can be reduced to propositional imaginings, that the former are thus not genuine, but merely quasi-emotions, and that there is a sharp division between reality and fiction, and our interactions with either - to Walton and thus understands his own criticism also as an argumentation against Walton's theory of our emotional engagement with fictional works.

Some comments

However, Walton does not accept the reducibility of fictional emotions to propositional imagining, as will become clear in a moment. Furthermore, it is likely that Walton would, or at least could, give up his narrow focus on emotions directed at fictional emotions in favour of applying his theory to emotions directed at other non-actual entities as well. And Moran's claim that fictional emotions are instances of genuine emotion still lacks proper support. Hence, Walton's theory is not vulnerable to the criticism put forward by Moran. Indeed, as will become clear, it might endorse some elements of Moran's account to its own advantage. To see this and the misunderstanding in Moran's discussion of certain aspects of Walton's theory, it will be helpful to have a closer look at the latter.

In a nutshell, Walton conceives of the basic experience of representational art as involving the following elements (cf. Walton (1990) and (1997)). First, we experience the material qualities of the work - for instance, the printed words or the configurations of colours and shapes. Second, and on the basis of this experience, we propositionally imagine whatever is represented by the work and thus part of its fictional world (namely by means of the help of explicitly or implicitly known principles or conventions linking the material features to the represented entities). And third, we imagine, as part of our engagement with the work, having a certain epistemic access (or standing in a certain epistemic relation) to the imagined world of the work. For instance, we imagine seeing the landscape depicted by the painting before us.

Now, it may happen, according to Walton, that this basic experience of representational art gives rise to

some emotional engagement with it - namely precisely if the basic experience elicits in us a certain quasi-emotion (i.e., an emotion-like feeling which is accompanied by some physiological events and perhaps also some action tendencies, though typically not of the same type and/or intensity as in real life). For instance, when watching a movie, we may come to have a feeling similar to those involved in fear or sympathy, and our heart rate or stomach may to some extent react accordingly, but we will not feel inclined to run away or help the characters (though we may be inclined to react in other ways - for example, to look away or to ignoring our partner next to us). What we then experience are fictional emotions.

Walton does not think that fictional emotions amount to genuine emotions, since he thinks that emotions require belief in the existence of their objects, as well as the respective motivations to act. Hence, he accepts (b) and rejects (a). But this is compatible with the idea that quasi-emotions are triggered by very similar - or even the same - mechanisms as those triggering genuine emotions in real life. For both types of affective responses may be due to dispositions to react affectively and physiologically to certain mental representations (whether they are perceptions, beliefs, or imaginings). However, that Walton thinks that fictional emotions are not genuine emotions does not mean that he does or should want to reduce them to propositional imaginings. In fact, he agrees with Moran that fictional emotions involve real feelings (though not real emotions), and not merely propositionally imagined feelings.

Above, I left it open why Moran might have overlooked or neglected the option - taken up by Walton at this point - to treat the real affective element of fictional emotions as a non-imaginative mental episode, which merely accompanies the underlying imagining of what is represented and does not enter the content or manner of the latter. As Moran observes, Walton claims that the occurrence of our fictional emotions is (typically) accompanied by its becoming fictionally true that we feel the corresponding real emotion towards the fictional entities. But Moran also appears to think that, in order for it to be fictionally true that we react with emotion to an entity within a fiction, it is necessary that we first engage in some form of imagining involving the respective emotion – either as part of its (propositional) content, or as constituent of its manner.¹¹ And given that Moran has convincingly concluded that the entering of an emotion into the content of propositional imagining is not sufficient for the occurrence of a fictional emotion, it seems natural that he develops the view that what is distinctive of fictional emotions is their involvement of an emotional manner of imagining.

However, Walton in fact does not think that we must or even usually do engage in imagining involving an emotion (whether in content or manner) prior to it becoming fictionally true that we feel the respective emotion towards some aspects of the fictional world in question. That is, according to Walton – and contrary to what Moran appears to take Walton's position to be -, that it is part of the fiction that we feel fear or sympathy towards certain characters does not require that imagine with fear or sympathy, or imagine that we feel fear or sympathy, or imagine feeling fear or sympathy. Indeed, the order of priority is often exactly

¹¹ For instance, cf. his seeming equation of being imagined and being fictionally true (92).

reversed. For Walton, fictional truths are not generated by imaginings (whether propositional or not), but instead by facts about the work and about the experiencing person in question. That it is fictional that the hero is mistreated is due to certain features of the novel or play; and that it is fictional that we feel sympathy for him (i.e., that we have the respective fictional emotion) is due to our real reaction - the state of our mind and body - while experiencing and understanding these features of the novel or play. But Walton nevertheless assumes a close link between fictional truths and imaginings: the former prescribe what a person engaging with an artwork should imagine propositionally. Accordingly, he claims that experiencing and noting certain fictional emotions may lead us to engage in further imaginative activity - for instance, by imagining that we feel a certain genuine emotion towards the imagined entities represented by a given work, on the basis of noticing that we feel the corresponding quasi-emotion when experiencing the work.

VI. The relationship between Moran's and Walton's accounts

Moran has clearly intended his proposal involving emotional imagining as an alternative to Walton's theory. However, in the light of the above considerations, one might instead feel inclined to read Moran's account - and, in particular, his introduction of an emotional manner of imagining - rather as a supplement to Walton's theory of fictional emotions. Indeed, Moran's postulation of the phenomenon of emotional imagining might be taken to shed further light on what actually happens when fictional emotions arise in the way described by Walton. The idea is that the affective and physiological (and perhaps also motivational) aspects involved in the quasi-emotional response somehow transform, or merge with, the original imagining of what the respective art work represents. As a result, there will be an instance of emotional imagining - namely the fictional emotion in question. And thus, Moran's idea of emotional imagining might be understood as adding something substantial to Walton's account of the nature of fictional emotions.

This would be particularly welcome because it would help to explain an important feature of emotions directed at fictions, namely that they differ from emotions in real life contexts in how they motivate us to act (e.g., we do not feel inclined to intervene in the fictional chain of events), and often also in the intensity of the involved feelings (e.g., the loss of a loved one is experienced much more intensely than the death of a lovable character). For the suggestion could be that both the lack of motivational concern towards the fictional world and the lesser degree of intensity of feeling are due to the close link to the underlying imagining. In particular, it might be claimed that we do not feel inclined to intervene in the fictional chain of events because we recognize that our emotional engagement is concerned with imagined entities; and that we recognize this link between the affective and the representational aspects of our experience because the former constitutes the manner of the representation involved in the latter.

Now, although the general approach of Walton seems to be in most respects compatible with Moran's considerations (sometimes contrary to what the latter thinks), there remains at least one important tension

between the two, which has incidentally the effect that adding the idea of emotional imagining to Walton's theory of our emotional engagement with fictions should count as a substantial revision of the latter. The point to be stressed here is that, in Walton's original theory, the imagining of what is represented by the work that gives rise to the emotional response is left entirely untouched by the latter, while according to Moran's idea of emotional imagining, the emotional response constitutes (or comes to constitute) the manner of imagining involved in the imaginative recognition of what is represented. But perhaps any difficulties for Walton's theory related to this slight modification would be outweighed by the benefits of adding Moran's idea of emotional imagining. However, the objections to the notion of emotional imagining raised above cast serious doubt on this potential supplement to Walton's own theory. And in addition, it is not exactly clear how the typical difference in intensity may be explained in terms of emotional imagining.

VII. The non-propositional imagining of emotions

But it is perhaps possible to identify another form of imagining, of which it may be reasonable to say that it is involved in fictional emotions and fulfils the role originally ascribed to emotional imagining, thus further elucidating what fictional emotions are and what happens when they occur, and explaining why they differ both in intensity and in motivation from real emotions.

Moran has introduced two kinds of imagining concerned with emotion: propositional imagining about emotions; and emotional imagining. The first is characterized by the fact that the emotions form part of the *propositional content* of the imagining - for instance, when we imagine that we have or feel fear directed at an imagined lion in the room. By contrast, Moran takes the latter to be an imagining with feeling, that is, an episode of imagining something in an emotional *manner*. But independently of what one thinks about the plausibility of the idea of emotional imagining, there is at least a third alternative in which emotions may enter the imagination: they may be part of the *non-propositional content* of - thus partly non-propositional - imaginings.

Consider the case of an imagined pain. Such an imaginative episode will differ phenomenologically from real instances of pain. For instance, we will not come to find the former unbearable in the same way as the latter: we will not cry or faint as a consequence of experiencing it. In this respect, imagined and remembered pains seem to be much closer to each other than to real ones. Nevertheless, imagined (and remembered) pains still involve some form of conscious or experiential awareness of pain: they have some experienced painfulness about them. In particular, they differ in this respect from merely thinking or propositionally imagining that oneself (or another person) feels a pain.¹² Moreover, the difference between imagined and

¹² It might indeed be possible, as Moran maintains, to 'imagine feeling something' without thereby actually feeling anything (93). However, this does not imply that we can with the same words describe the itself really affective imaginative episode concerned with the non-propositional representation of a feeling. And the phenomenon, which Moran has in mind, is perhaps closer to dispassionate propositional imagining (i.e., imagining that one has a certain

really felt pains does not seem to be a matter of degree (e.g., in determinacy, intensity or "vivacity"). We do often have real pains which are not very intense or determinate, but which we nevertheless experience as real pains, and not merely as imagined ones. And it is also plausible to assume that we can imagine rather strong and specific pains, without thereby beginning to really feel pain.

The best alternative seems therefore to assume that the difference between real and imagined pains is due to the fact that imagining (and perhaps also remembering) pain involves a qualitatively different experiential element from really feeling pain. The idea is that, while having a real pain involves (or consists in) the experience of *real pain*, imagining a pain involves (or consists in) the experience of *represented pain*. This means that instances of imagined pain are literally understood as instances of imagining the experience of real pain. The idea is thus that, given that real pains involve the experiential feature of painfulness, imaginative representations of them will involve such an experiential aspect as well - however, only by representing it, and without themselves instantiating it (i.e., without themselves becoming real pains).¹³ In fact, it seems difficult to conceive of any alternative claim which could explain the fact that imagined pains do not constitute real pains and are not experienced as such, but nevertheless involve some kind of experience of painfulness. The only obvious solution seems to say that imagined pains represent painfulness, without really being painful. But the proposed imaginative representation of an experience of real pain should be understood as non-propositional. For it does not require the possession of the concept of real pain and hence cannot involve the entertaining of a proposition containing this concept. In other words, it is not identical with a thought about an experience of pain, but instead consists in an affective and non-propositional representation of painfulness.¹⁴

The idea is now that fictional emotions involve, at least sometimes, the non-propositional imagining of the corresponding real emotions (or at least the conscious mental parts of these real emotions). Accordingly, when we feel fear or sympathy towards some fictional entity, we do not experience real feelings of fear or sympathy. Instead, we experience represented feelings of fear or sympathy. And the respective episodes of non-propositional imaginative representation are really affective: they involve real feelings - though not those of real fear or sympathy, but only those of non-propositionally represented fear or sympathy. Hence, fictional emotions turn out to be at best quasi-emotions: they do not even share the same kind of feeling with genuine emotions.

feeling).

13 Cf. Martin (2002): section 3 for such a claim about imagined itches. My considerations about imagined pain have been informed by his considerations, but do not aim to accurately reflect them.

14 The idea of the non-propositional imagining of a mental episode may also be used to clarify what it means to say that one is imagining seeing something - in particular, if the latter is offered as an analysis of what it means to say that one visualizes something (cf. the debate mentioned in note 5 above). Moran discusses and rejects this view in the context of scrutinizing Walton's idea that all imagining is a form of 'self-imagining' or 'imagining de se' (90ff.). Note, however, that, for Walton, the imagining of a mental experience is only a special form of 'imagining de se', namely what he calls 'imagining from the inside' (cf. Walton (1990): 29ff.). And independently of whether one believes the sometimes proposed analysis of visualizing in terms of imagining an episode of seeing to be correct or illuminating, it seems difficult to deny that there are instances of the non-propositional imagining of mental episodes.

This proposal may then be used to explain why the resulting affective states do not motivate us in the same way as the real emotions, namely to interact with the respective entities at which they are directed. The idea is that the emotional aspect loses its motivational power, once it is experienced, not in an immediate way, but instead only mediated by a non-propositional representation of it. Thus, while the experience of fear felt towards the real lion in the room still has the power to move us to run away, the imaginative representation of such an experience of fear directed at a lion does not possess this power anymore. Similarly, the intensity of the feeling usually decreases when we switch from a real experience to a represented one. Thus our imaginations and memories of fear are typically (though not always) less vivid than the comparable experiences of fear in real life situations. The claim that the mental episodes involved in fictional emotions amount to non-propositional imaginings of feelings may thus help to account for some important characteristics of the former.

But how does it fit with Moran's and Walton's accounts? The proposal is clearly at odds with Moran's idea of emotional imagining; and this is not unintentional, given the objections to the latter. The rejection of the notion of emotional imagining does not, however, amount to a denial of the possibility to imagine something with joy or pain. But it entails that the latter can be understood only in two ways: either as the possibility to imagine something and subsequently responding to it with real joy or pain without thereby affecting the original imagining; or as the possibility to non-propositionally imagine an experience of real joy or pain in the sense just described. But the proposal also does not fit too easily with Walton's account. The main point here is that Walton assumes a different order of mental events: first comes the imagining of what is represented by the work, then the emotional response towards it, and only after that any (propositional) imagining about oneself feeling the emotion. But perhaps this aspect of Walton's account could be modified accordingly by proposing that what happens when fictional emotions occur is that the original propositional imagining of what is represented - or, rather, its content - is simply embedded as part of the content of the non-propositionally imagined emotional response.

However, the new proposal is itself not without difficulties. The major problem seems to be that our emotional responses towards fictional entities are often, if not always, passive with respect to when they occur, what type of emotional reaction they involve, and which fictional entities they are directed at. By contrast, the imaginativeness of the non-propositional imagining of emotional episodes usually allows for the voluntary control over its occurrence and content (e.g., which emotional response towards which entities). For example, it seems difficult to identify instances of spontaneously or otherwise passively caused imagined feelings. Typically, we are not suddenly overcome by an imagined itch, or imagined jealousy.

Hence, the new proposal does not seem to be able to capture at least many instances of fictional emotions. Perhaps, the solution maybe to maintain that there are two kinds of fictional emotions, one of the quasi-emotional nature described by Walton, and the other of the imaginative nature described by the new

proposal. But perhaps, it is more reasonable to stick to Walton's original account and to accept that imagining - whether in the form of emotional imagining or non-propositional imagining - is not involved in fictional emotions, apart from the fact that these emotional responses are typically triggered by and directed at (propositionally) imagined objects and events.¹⁵

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